

# Michigan Regional Skills Alliances<sup>SM</sup>



## Newsletter: Special Edition 2006 Year in Review

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### **To Our Partners,**

2006 was an exciting year for the Michigan Regional Skills Alliances Initiative. The hard work and innovative ideas of so many alliance partnerships continued to show the positive results of collaborative regional thinking. Many of the goals outlined in the original MiRSA strategic plans have been realized. In three years the MiRSA initiative has touched over 580 employers, 240 education and training providers and 56 community and faith-based organizations. As a result of their efforts, training involving more than 6,400 individuals and job placement of over 1,000 people has occurred. The foresight of MiRSA conveners made this possible. By the end of 2006 we had 31 MiRSAs representing 8 industry sectors and our work has just begun.

The merging of economic and workforce development over the past ten years has caused substantial changes in the way the federal government funds programs. The United States Department of Labor (DOL) has encouraged communities to look past geographic sub-divisions of government and work together as regions. Federal dollars are flowing to states and areas that embrace a regional philosophy. The WIRED grants announced early in 2006 are a prime example. Because Michigan communities have been working regionally on initiatives like MiRSAs, they were able to respond quickly and thoughtfully to the WIRED opportunity.

In 2006, the Department of Labor and Economic Growth/Bureau of Workforce Programs (BWP) initiated the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce initiative. Thirteen regions covering all 83 Michigan counties received \$1.3 million in planning grants. The plans address how the regions will build partnerships that can assess local labor market skills and devise strategies to concentrate on both the intermediate and long-term workforce needs of employers. Ultimately, the focus on employers, labor markets, worker skills and research will lead to the development of more Michigan Regional Skills Alliances. It is anticipated there will not only be more MiRSAs, but they will also cover a wider variety of industry sectors.

In summary, do to the tremendous support of all the MiRSA partners, the Michigan Regional Skills Alliances initiative is working extremely well and 2006 was a very good year for MiRSAs .

## Featured MiRSA:

### **Southeast Michigan Information Security** **Michigan Regional Skills Alliance<sup>SM</sup>**

*“As a person who has worked extensively with the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security’s National Cybersecurity Division, I can attest that the Southeast Michigan Information Security MiRSA<sup>SM</sup> is a national leader in the effort to make America more secure. The fact that this leadership originates here in the State of Michigan rather than in Washington DC makes this accomplishment all the more remarkable. The market-place of ideas that the Information Security MiRSA has established is indeed a rare resource for any area in the country and it is a mark of distinction for this State.”*

*Dan Shoemaker, Ph.D.  
Professor, University of Detroit Mercy*

Southeast Michigan encompasses more than half of Michigan’s population and is home to a diverse technology industry. The evolution of information security technology and globalization of the economy has created a need for a highly skilled and trained information security workforce - the Southeast Michigan Information Security MiRSA was organized to address this issue. Automation Alley, a not-for-profit technology consortium, serves as convener for the MiRSA.

The vision of the MiRSA is to develop and maintain the highest trained and skilled Information Assurance workforce, not only in Michigan, but also in the nation. The MiRSA will be the hub for employers, educators,

trainers and employees seeking information on security career ladders and training needed for security occupations. The MiRSA will continually identify emerging job classifications that can be incorporated into Michigan’s education and training system and create opportunities for the workforce.

Automation Alley felt so strongly about the issue and the MiRSA concept they invested in a full-time manager with extensive project management experience to lead the effort. In its first year, the MiRSA has established 72 partnerships with 160 employer participants. The MiRSA has regularly brought to its meetings high-level speakers including representatives from the National Security Agency, the British Standards Institute and MiRSA partners with expertise in the security field.

The MiRSA recently prepared and implemented a first of its kind Information Assurance (IA) Employer Survey to gauge the condition of the region’s information security industry. The survey will enable the MiRSA to assist employers with their efforts to build secure corporate environments. To help defray costs, a market research and strategy company (and MiRSA member), donated their expertise. The compiled data is posted on the Web site [www.automationally.com/mirsa](http://www.automationally.com/mirsa) and a White Paper has been published.

Southeastern Michigan Michigan Works! Agencies have designated \$1,280,000 in cash and \$34,000 in-kind contributions over three years to implement a security-training program. Training will be directed at incumbent

workers, the unemployed and future workers. The MiRSA encourages businesses to evaluate their security risk level and has presented free business risk assessment trainings. The sessions are conducted by a MiRSA member at no charge to the MiRSA. Automation Alley is having its own security system assessed and will serve as an example of good security practices. Another MiRSA member firm is donating the evaluation.

*“All businesses must develop and maintain a strategy to protect intellectual property in a manner that addresses the every changing computer information network that is under constant global attack. Cost effective information security training is especially import to small businesses such as DASI Solutions because firms of our size often overlook the risks associated to having an unprotected network. Automation Alley’s Information Security Michigan Regional Skills Alliances has provided DASI Solutions with a methodology to assess credentials of future employees who will be responsible for securing our intellectual property from potential attacks or misuse. It is our belief that every company that make use of a computer network could benefit from the informational seminars and networking opportunities as hosted by Automation Alley’s Information Security MiRSA.”*

David Darbyshire  
Engineer / Owner, DASI Solutions LLC

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## Section Profile

Governor Jennifer Granholm announced the Michigan Regional Skills Alliances

(MiRSA) initiative in her State of the State address in January 2004. MiRSA staff provides technical support to organizations researching the feasibility of forming a MiRSA as well as to new, existing and expanding MiRSAs. The Michigan Regional Skills Alliances staff is part of the Bureau of Workforce Programs within the Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

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## The Year in Review

In 2006, seven new MiRSAs were formed including three in hospitality and tourism, two in manufacturing and one in both construction and biotechnology. The formation of a biotechnology MiRSA is the first for the sector and the second addressing an emerging industry. In addition, two existing MiRSAs were expanded in healthcare and manufacturing. These are the first existing conveners to diversify into new market segments and indicate that organizations overseeing MiRSAs are finding them successful. A planning grant to research the feasibility and development of an agricultural MiRSA was made late in the year. In total, over \$880,000 was invested by the state in the initiative in 2006.

Employers are finding value in participating in MiRSAs. The ability to meet and network with peers in a supportive non-competitive environment, accessing government resources, training current workers and developing applicants for the future were all valued outcomes of their involvement. The positive results experienced by MiRSA partners have raised expectations for the future.

♦ The third Michigan Regional Skills Alliances conference was held in Detroit, in October 2006.

Approximately 120 individuals representing the majority of MiRSAs attended. The event provided insight into sector strategies and gave participants hands-on experience in sector mapping. An overwhelming majority of attendees found the conference to be extremely useful and rated it 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest.

♦ A learning institute focusing on long-term care, specifically for healthcare MiRSAs, was held in June. Over 100 attendees representing every existing healthcare MiRSA participated in the daylong event.

♦ The name *Michigan Regional Skills Alliances* and *MiRSA* were Service Marked giving the DLEG/BWP authority over how and where they are used. Service Marking is also an integral part of the “branding” process to help market MiRSAs.

♦ Through efforts of the Department of Agriculture and the BWP, development of an agricultural MiRSA is underway.

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## Select Individual MiRSA Highlights

♦ The Southwest MI Health Care Alliance enrolled 455 students in skills training for 15 different healthcare occupations - a 22% increase over the first year.

♦ The Northwest MI Healthcare Workforce Alliance sponsored 10 classes attended by 412 incumbent workers for skill upgrades.

♦ The Southeast MI Information Security Alliance received national attention for their work conducted through the MiRSA.

♦ The Employment Builders Alliance, Advanced Manufacturing Coop expanded their service sector to include information, sales and service companies. The MiRSA has trained a total of 566 employees from 41 different companies in 45 subject areas, thus far.

♦ 25 of 37 graduates of the Electrical Line Technician class of 2006 have secured employment in the field.

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## MiRSAs Participating at the National Level

♦ Because of the MiRSA effort, the State of Michigan has been selected to participate in the National Governors Associations (NGA) Center for Best Practices project on *Accelerating State Adoption of Sector Strategies*.

♦ Several national organizations were interested in the MiRSA initiative and presentations were made at national conferences including the Heartland Professional Development Symposium.

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## Summary of New MiRSAs

### Funded in the fall of 2006

#### **Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Hospitality RSA**

**Grant Amount:** \$100,000

**Service Region:** Berrien, Cass, Van  
Buren Counties

**Convener:** Michigan Works! Berrien,  
Cass, Van Buren

**Industry Focus:** Hospitality & Tourism

**Summary:** The MiRSA was established to address an anticipated increase in demand for skilled labor in the hospitality industry as a result of the Harbor Shores Redevelopment project. The MiRSA will implement the recommendations of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) study of labor and training needs for the area.

#### **Capital Area Construction Council**

**Grant Amount:** \$100,000

**Service Region:** Clinton, Eaton, Ingham  
and Livingston Counties

**Convener:** Capital Area Michigan  
Works!

**Industry Focus:** Construction

**Summary:** Based on projected labor shortages as a result of retirements and young people not going into the construction field, the MiRSA will focus on recruitment and training of construction workers.

#### **Delta County Tourism RSA**

**Grant Amount:** \$84,182

**Service Region:** Central U.P.

**Convener:** Delta County Area Chamber  
of Commerce

**Industry Focus:** Tourism

**Summary:** The MiRSA will address an employability skills gap, primarily in computer operations and service skills, in the tourism industry in Delta County. In addition, a second goal is to increase the pipeline of workers in the tourism industry to address a projected labor shortage.

#### **Detroit Regional Manufacturing Skills**

**Grant Amount:** \$92,000

**Service Region:** Southeastern Michigan  
– 9 Counties

**Convener:** Detroit Regional Chamber

**Industry Focus:** Advanced  
Manufacturing and Materials  
Development

**Summary:** The MiRSA vision is to support and grow an innovative, flexible workforce to meet the current and future challenges of advanced manufacturing. A key function of the MiRSA is to create a resource map and “overcome a perceived culture of competition” that exists in Southeast Michigan.

#### **Preparing the SCMW! Region for the Biotech Age**

**Grant Amount:** \$79,750

**Service Region:** Hillsdale, Jackson and  
Lenawee Counties

**Convener:** South Central MI Works!

**Industry Focus:** Life  
Science/Homeland Security

**Summary:** Focusing on the chemical industry in the tri-county area, the MiRSA will work with employers and

educators to develop curriculum, increase skill levels of incumbent workers and develop a pipeline of new employees.

### **Southeast Michigan Hospitality and Tourism RSA**

**Grant Amount:** \$90,000

**Service Region:** Southeastern Michigan

**Convener:** Washtenaw County Employment Training and Community Services/Michigan Works! and the Livingston Michigan Works Agency!

**Industry Focus:** Hospitality and Tourism

**Summary:** The MiRSA was established in July 2005 to address training and employment needs in anticipation of Superbowl XL. Grant money will be used in conjunction with other sources of funding to develop a strategic plan to improve and increase training, promote interest in hospitality and tourism related careers, develop a marketing plan, facilitate the development and delivery of training and educational opportunities and increase the number of employers using the One Stop Service Centers.

### **Tri County Advanced Manufacturing Alliance**

**Grant Amount:** \$90,000

**Service Region:** Saginaw Midland and Bay Counties

**Convener:** Saginaw, Midland Bay Michigan Works! and the Saginaw Valley Manufacturers' Association

**Industry Focus:** Advanced Manufacturing

**Summary:** The Saginaw Valley Manufacturers' Association has

identified several areas that need to be addressed to sustain manufacturing in the area: increase the number of students choosing manufacturing as a career through the expansion of career ladders, close incumbent workers skill gaps and diversify current businesses to succeed in new markets. The MiRSA has developed a work plan to address these issues.

### **MiRSA Expansions Funded in the fall of 2006**

#### **Bridges to Success: Networking the Manufacturing and Health Care sectors for the advancement of incumbent workers and recruitment of transitioning workers.**

**Grant Amount:** \$85,000

**Service Region:** West Michigan – Kent County

**Convener:** The Delta Strategy

**Industry Focus:** Healthcare

**Summary:** Partnering with WIRED West Michigan, the MiRSA will pilot a model to transition displaced workers from manufacturing, a shrinking industry in the area, into healthcare – a growth industry in the area. If successful, the effort will be expanded to include more manufacturers and healthcare employers.



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